

# LAKE OROVILLE STATE RECREATION AREA

In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln authorized a federal grant transferring the area known as the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Redwoods to California. This act marked the beginning of the state park concept, not just for California but for the entire nation. These properties were subsequently returned to the federal government to become part of Yosemite National Park. The first of California's present-day parks, the California Redwood Park at Big Basin, Santa Cruz County, was created in 1902 following an avalanche of public demand to preserve these magnificent redwoods for posterity. This was followed by state acquisition of other redwood groves and several historic sites. Finally, public sentiment prevailed on the Legislature to create a State Park Commission and a Division of Beaches and Parks in 1927 to look after park properties then in state ownership and to develop a system of state parks. Today, the Department of Parks and Recreation administers nearly 200 units including scenic and natural parks and reserves, historical units and museums, ocean beaches, underwater parks, recreation areas, and wayside campgrounds. The California State Park System thus offers an outstanding opportunity to learn about the matchless environment and rich cultural heritage being preserved for present and future generations of Californians. For further information, write the Department at P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento 95811.



State of California — The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION  
P. O. Box 2390 Sacramento 95811

## LAKE OROVILLE STATE RECREATION AREA

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area in Butte County offers as wide a variety of outdoor activities as can be found anywhere in California. With recreation facilities operated by the State Department of Parks and Recreation, this key unit of the State Water Project offers camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hiking, sail and power boating, waterskiing, fishing, swimming, boat-in camping, and overnight boat camping.

The area is located on the Feather River in the chaparral-oak-pine belt of the northern Mother Lode country about 75 miles north of Sacramento.

When full to the 900-foot elevation mark, the lake offers 15,500 surface acres for recreation and 167 miles of shoreline. Recreation areas are spotted around the lake, and boaters can land at any point to explore the surrounding country. State property extends a minimum of 300 feet, and in some places as much as a mile, from the high water line.

An annual control program keeps down the poison oak in developed areas, but visitors should be on the lookout for it at all times. You are cautioned not to hike in slide areas.

When planning an excursion to Lake Oroville, your best bet is to select the area to visit

that offers the most in the kind of facilities you are looking for.

### Dam Overlook

A visitor center on a hill southeast of the dam overlooks the lake and dam. A variety of interpretive displays and statistical information explain the construction and operation of the dam and the purposes and use of the lake. A large parking lot, restrooms, a souvenir shop, and refreshment stand serve visitors at this scenic vista point. Eventually, these facilities will be moved to Kelly Ridge when the visitor center complex is built. The present timetable envisions construction at Kelly Ridge to be completed in 1972. The overlook can be reached by continuing up Oroville Dam Boulevard beyond the dam turnoff.

### Loafer Creek

A camping area with 136 Class A family campsites is located at Loafer Creek. Each site contains a parking space, table, and stove. Piped drinking water and combination buildings with modern restrooms, hot showers, and laundry tubs are nearby.

The area's 50 individual picnic sites are turfed and sprinkled regularly to hold down dust, and a sandy swimming beach is located near where Loafer Creek empties into the lake.

A large paved parking lot and a 3-lane boat launching ramp complete the facilities here. Paved roads lead to all areas.

### Spillway Marina

A drive across the great earth-fill Oroville Dam leads to the spillway marina at the north end of the dam. Facilities include a 13-lane boat launching ramp, ample parking space, picnic tables, and chemical toilets. A floating service station offers rental boats and mooring berths and sells gas, oil, boating and fishing supplies, snacks and soft drinks. Boats with self-contained sanitary facilities may also have their tanks pumped out here.

### Lime Saddle

The Butte County Board of Supervisors, under an agreement with the Department, has contracted the development and operation of the Lime Saddle area to a concessionaire. Here visitors will find a paved parking area, a 3-lane boat launching ramp, picnic facilities, and chemical toilets. A marina offers boat docking, gas and oil, fishing and boating supplies, and a snack bar.

### North Forebay

The 300-acre Thermalito Forebay North is a day use area planted to turf and regularly watered and mowed. Young shade trees from many parts of the world dot the area, including European sycamore, olive, pome, valley oak, and Zalkova. Ramadas (shade structures) protect the 15 picnic sites, each of which contains a stove and one or two picnic tables. Four outlets, three faucets and a drinking fountain, provide potable water. The 200-yard sandy swimming beach is complemented by men's and women's dressing rooms. Chemical toilets are nearby.

Paved parking is offered at the picnic area and at the two-lane boat launching ramp. The north forebay is reserved exclusively for sailboats, canoes, and other nonpower-driven boats. Four picnic tables are located near the launching ramp and garbage cans are spotted throughout the area.

### South Forebay

Thermalito Forebay South has a parking lot, 4-lane boat launching ramp, picnic tables, and chemical toilets. There is no shade and potable water is not available. Power boating and fishing are the main attractions here.

### Boat-In Camps

Several boat-in camps are located around the lake and on its tributaries. These areas can be reached only by boat, and directions to the camp of your choice can be obtained at the park entrance station or launching area. Each camp contains between six and ten individual campsites, except for the group camp at South Bloomer which is a cleared area that will accommodate groups of up to 75 persons.

The camps have cleared and leveled spots for pitching tents, pit toilets, garbage cans, and a table and stove at each site. No water is piped to these areas, so bring your own or bring chemicals to purify lake water.

The boat-in camps were constructed in the winter of 1970 by State Park personnel and

Conservation Camp crews from the State Division of Forestry and Department of Corrections.

There are two ways to reach the two most southerly boat-in camps. Craig Saddle, east of the spillway, is located behind an island-like land mass and can be approached from either the Middle or South Fork of the Feather River. Foreman Point can be reached from the southeast from the lake itself or from the North Fork Feather River.

Other boat-in camps are at Goat Ranch, near the junction of the West Branch and the North Fork Feather River, and at the Bloomer Primitive Area, where North Point, Knoll, South Cove, and South Bloomer camps are located. The latter is a group camp and advance arrangements for this camp should be made with the Recreation Area Office.

### Oroville Wildlife Area

Although it is in its early stages of development, the 5300-acre Oroville Wildlife Area managed by the Department of Fish and Game provides excellent fishing opportunities for warmwater species. The area also provides some waterfowl hunting in season. Long-range plans of the Department of Fish and Game are to improve wildlife habitat in the area not only for hunting and fishing but also for other recreational pursuits such as boating and birdwatching, primarily financed by hunting and fishing license buyers.

### Thermalito Afterbay

Waterfowl and pheasant hunting around the 2000-acre Thermalito Afterbay in season are popular with scattergunners, particularly from nonpower-driven boats. Limited fishing opportunities are present. The Department of Fish and Game manages the area.

### Overnight Boating

Overnight boating is offered at Lake Oroville, but in order to prevent the lake from becoming contaminated, boats must have self-contained sanitary facilities and all waste and water outlets must be sealed. State Park Rangers will inspect your boat before you launch.

Several boat mooring areas have been established on the lake and its tributaries. Located in coves, they offer shelter from the wind and a haven out of the way of other boat traffic.

There are no facilities at these mooring areas, and although open fires are not permitted, you are welcome to go ashore to explore, to sleep, or even to cook and eat provided you have a Coleman-type stove. Mooring areas are identified with buoys and you can tie up to shore or anchor offshore.

Mooring areas are located at Woodman Ravine on the South Fork Feather River, Sycamore Cove on the Middle Fork, Bloomer Ravine and French Creek on the North Fork, and Spring Valley on the West Branch. Park personnel will be happy to direct you to the mooring area of your choice.

### Swimming

Swimming is provided at designated areas around the lake. Swimmers are cautioned, however, that limited lifeguard services are offered only at Loafer Creek and the North Forebay.

### Trails

A 7½-mile riding and hiking trail meanders down the scenic Lower Feather River Canyon from the visitor center to the overlook above the Thermalito Diversion Dam. The park staff can suggest equally interesting hiking opportunities.

### Boating Tips

The experienced boater will probably be self-sufficient, but some tips might be helpful to beginners. Floating logs and other driftwood can be hazardous to boaters at any time of year, but particularly in winter and spring when fresh rains carry debris into the water.

A five-mile-per-hour speed limit is in effect when coming within 100 feet of a swimmer or 200 feet of shore. The upper reaches of the tributaries, where the water begins to get shallow, are posted for five-mile-per-hour speed limits. These areas are too narrow for safe water skiing.

Night boating is permissible provided your boat is equipped with the proper running lights and speed does not exceed five miles per hour. Boaters are expected to demonstrate the same concern for safety and courtesy that they would expect from other boaters.

Should you leave your boat to go ashore, be sure to tie it up securely. This is especially important for the fast-running upper reaches of



the lake's tributaries, where a sloppy tie-up may result in damage to or the sinking of your boat, or at best a long walk or swim.

The dumping of waste or refuse in any of the area's waters is prohibited at all times. Please help us keep Lake Oroville's waters clean by honoring this restriction.

All boaters should be familiar with boating rules and regulations. You may obtain a copy of *The ABC's of California Boating Law* from the Department of Navigation and Ocean Development in Sacramento or at a launching ramp.

#### Fires and Fuel

The lush grasses and heavy brush that grow in the foothills surrounding Lake Oroville dry up in the summer and create a condition of extreme fire hazard. For this reason, no open fires are permitted anywhere in the recreation area. Your cooperation in fire prevention practices and in reporting immediately any fire you may discover may save lives and property. If you are near a telephone, call the Oroville office of the Division of Forestry, 533-6363. Otherwise, tell the nearest park employee. As another fire prevention measure, please smoke only in designated areas.

Down wood in a normal part of the ecology of the area and its collection and use are prohibited. You are advised to bring your own fuel or firewood, and if you forget or are unable to do this, fuel can be purchased at the park entrance. The grilladler-type cooking stoves are excellent for charcoal briquets and barbecuing, and the charcoal has the advantage of providing a hot fire for a much longer period than wood.

Your own Coleman-type stove may be used in designated camping or day use areas.

#### Driftwood

Although driftwood can be hazardous to boating, it can also provide some interesting recreation. Because it is not part of the area's natural ecology, driftwood may be collected and used for firewood, and the more interesting specimens can be kept for collector's items.

Even driftwood which was washed ashore may be picked up. It is easily recognized by its lack of bark and an exterior smoothed and polished by water action. It can be found in the lake and its tributaries or ashore between the lake level and the high water mark.

February through April is the best time for collecting driftwood, but it is available all year long.

#### Fishing

More than a million fish have been planted in Lake Oroville in the last few years, and both shore and boat fishing are popular. Rainbow trout and large- and small-mouthed bass are most frequently caught, but you might land a German

brown, a catfish, a silver salmon, or a Kokanee salmon. Fishing is permitted all year long but remember, a California sportfishing license is required.

Shore and boat fishing are also available in the North and South Forebays, where rainbow trout, catfish, and large- and small-mouth bass can be found. Fishing in the swimming areas is not allowed.

#### Wildlife

With all that water, there's an abundant and varied wildlife population around Lake Oroville. Resident species include raccoon, opossum, coyotes, tree and ground squirrels, rabbits, deer, skunks, ring-tailed cats, and many kinds of birds. And of course, always be careful of rattlesnakes which are native to the area. Remember that the park's wildlife — except legal fish — is protected by law.

#### Vegetation Control Areas

On the map, you will notice several areas marked "Vegetation Control." The natural vegetation, brush, grass, and weeds, was left intact at the request of the Department of Fish and Game. The vegetation provides shelter for fish, entices the fish to congregate so that they are easier to catch, and provides a more abundant food supply than in open areas of the lake. Anglers may fish in all vegetation control areas.

#### Also Worth Visiting

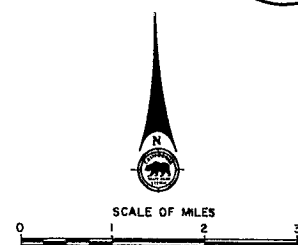
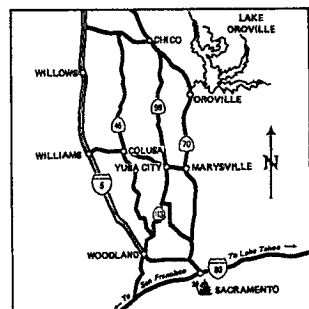
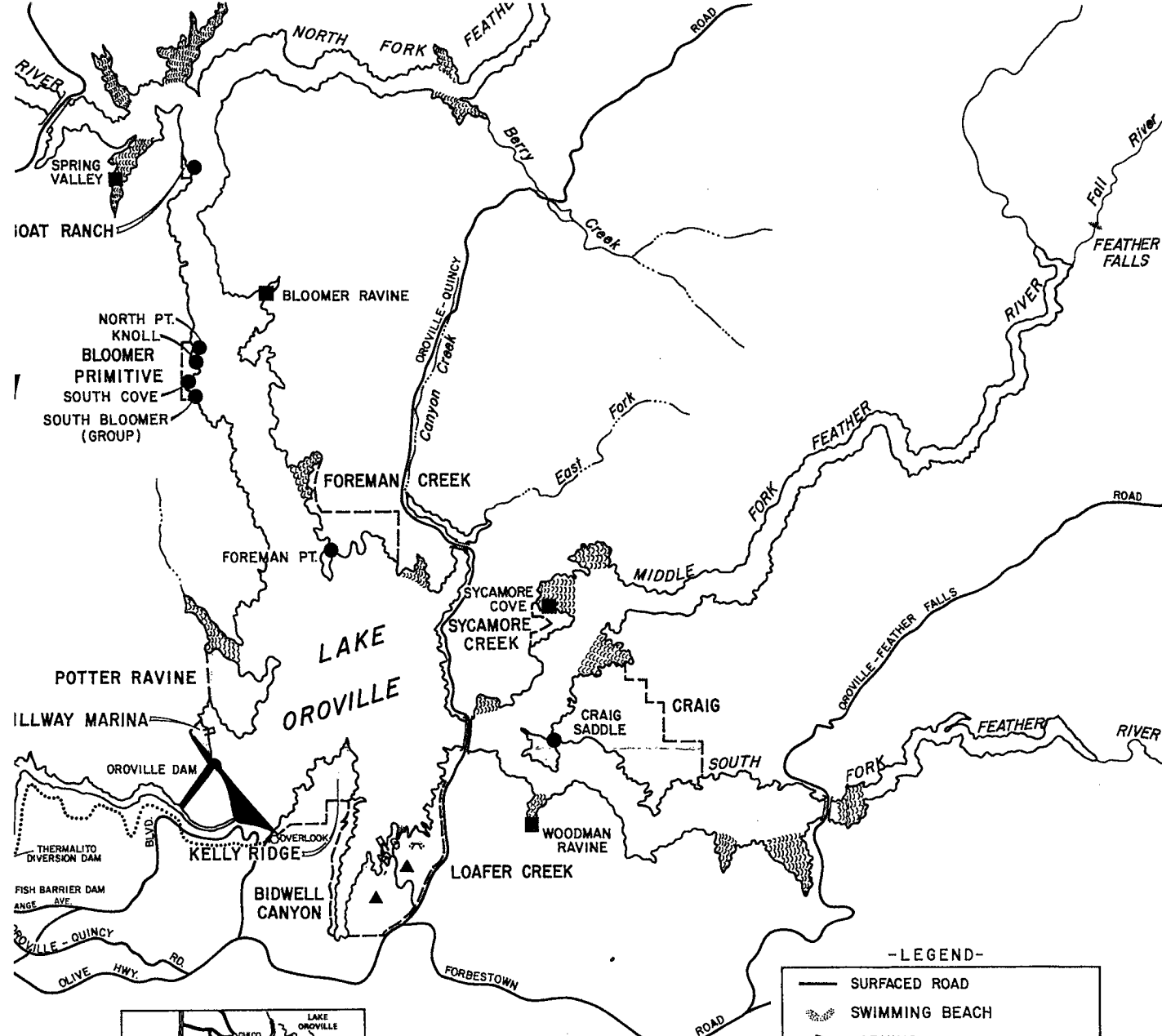
Spectacular Feather Falls on Fall River is prettier than a picture post card and is worth a trip up the Middle Fork Feather River. This falls, which is especially beautiful during the spring runoff, sends a cascade of water 640 feet into the river below.

When the lake is at its maximum elevation, you can boat within a quarter of a mile of the falls. At lower levels, you will have to walk farther. There is no trail, but the few rocks in the way are easily climbed. Be sure to tie your boat securely before debarking.

At Oroville Dam, visitors may take guided tours beneath the dam to see the Department of Water Resources powerhouse and view the power generation facilities. Call Charles VonBerg, 534-2436 in Oroville or Don Oaks, 445-8050 in Sacramento, to join a tour.

The Feather River Fish Hatchery across the river from the city of Oroville is a 20,000,000-egg capacity salmon and steelhead hatchery built by the Department of Water Resources and operated by the Department of Fish and Game. Underwater windows give you a closeup of the fish.

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area  
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-LEGEND-	
	SURFACED ROAD
	SWIMMING BEACH
	PARKING
	TRAIL
	BOAT LAUNCHING
	HOUSE BOAT MOORING
	BOAT-IN CAMPING
	CAMPING
	VEGETATION RETENTION AREAS
	PICNIC AREA

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